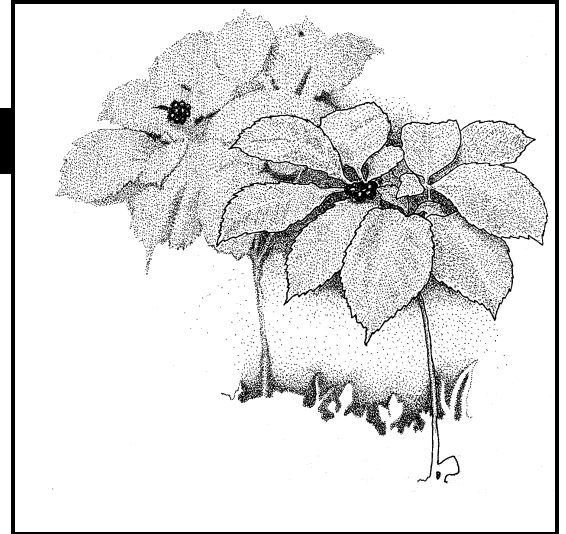


wild ginseng

its conservation in Indiana

Purpose of the Ginseng Law

The purpose of Indiana's ginseng program (Public Law 107 (IC 14-4-8) and Ginseng Rule (312 IAC 19) is to insure a healthy population for the future. The HARVEST SEASON was instituted to encourage replanting of the seeds when they are ripe and insure that only mature plants are taken. Registration of dealers and certification of ginseng is required in order to monitor the health of the population. The SELLING SEASON was established for this purpose. Ginseng that is bought for resale must be certified by a Conservation Officer. By monitoring reports from dealers it is easier to determine if ginseng is declining and needs further protection.



HARVEST SEASON (SEPTEMBER 1 TO DECEMBER 31 OF EACH YEAR): Harvesters can legally dig wild ginseng. Harvesters do not need a license to dig ginseng nor sell ginseng to a licensed dealer.

SELLING SEASON

(SEPTEMBER 1 OF CURRENT YEAR THROUGH MARCH 31 OF THE NEXT YEAR): Dealers can legally purchase ginseng from harvesters.

When reselling ginseng purchased directly from harvesters, the dealer must fill out a form certifying the ginseng's origin and weight. A copy of the certification must accompany the ginseng when it is shipped.

Rules to follow

- 1: It is **ILLEGAL** to harvest wild ginseng out of season. A Class A misdemeanor.
- 2: To harvest **LEGALLY**, a ginseng plant must have: at least 3 prongs and a flowering or fruiting stalk, or at least 4 internodes on the rhizome. To harvest plants not meeting these criteria is a Class B infraction.
- 3: It is **REQUIRED** that mature fruits and any seeds on the harvested ginseng be planted in the vicinity where the plant was dug and in a manner that encourages germination.
- 4: It is **REQUIRED** that the entire stalk and leaves be retained with the plant until it is taken to the harvester's residence or place of business, unless the root has at least 4 internodes on the rhizome.
- 5: It is **ILLEGAL** to sell or remove mature fruits and seeds from the vicinity where the ginseng was taken.
- 6: It is **ILLEGAL** to buy, sell, or possess any ginseng out of season without written authorization from the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Law Enforcement. A Class B misdemeanor.
- 7: It is **ILLEGAL** to buy uncertified ginseng for resale without an Indiana Ginseng Dealer's License. A Class B misdemeanor.
- 8: **ONLY** certified ginseng can be sold to a buyer in another state. To export uncertified ginseng is a Class A misdemeanor.
- 9: **HARVEST** ginseng only where it is permitted—digging on State property is not allowed; digging on private property without permission is theft; digging on other properties may require a permit.
- 10: Anyone violating these rules will be prosecuted.

Life history

Ginseng grows throughout Indiana. Small groups or solitary plants can be found in shady hardwood forests, on moist, rich, well-drained soil. Generally, there is not too much competing ground cover.

Ginseng cannot reproduce until it is 3 or 4 years old. At that time it bears a round cluster of pale green flowers. These flowers produce a fruit-cluster that turns bright red when ripe, about the middle of August.

Planting seeds near where the roots have been dug rather than scattering them on the surface will greatly increase chances of new plants replacing those harvested. This is required by rule 312 IAC 19-1-8 to aid in ginseng reproduction.

There is no need to carry a large shovel or dig a large hole. This is more work and disturbs surrounding plants. Digging a smaller hole with a digging stick or trowel is sufficient.

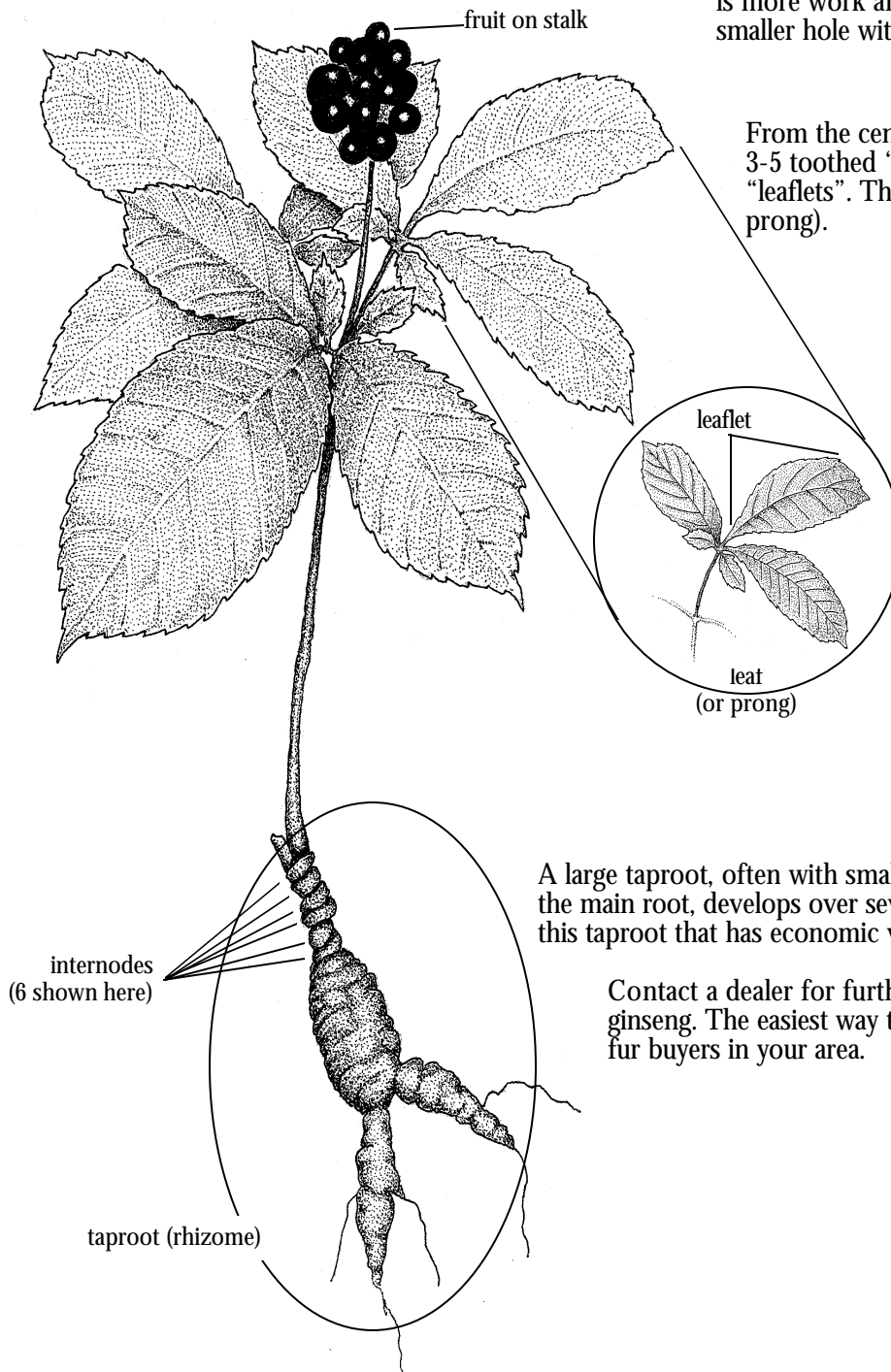
From the central stem comes 1 or more leaf stalks. The 3-5 toothed "leaves" at the base of each stalk are actually "leaflets". These leaflets and their stalk make up 1 leaf (or prong).

First year plants are only about 2 inches tall and have 1 leaf (prong) with 3 leaflets. Second and third year plants have 2 prongs with 5 leaflets each. Plants 4 years and older are 12-14 inches tall and have 3 prongs with 5 leaflets. The 2 leaflets at the prong base are smaller than the other 3. Plants older than 4 years may have 3-5 prongs, each with 5 leaflets.

In order to maintain a healthy ginseng crop, it is illegal to dig the taproot until a plant has 3 or 4 prongs. Harvesting younger plants prevents them from producing seed to reproduce themselves.

A large taproot, often with smaller tails forking off the main root, develops over several years. It is this taproot that has economic value.

Contact a dealer for further advice on digging and drying ginseng. The easiest way to find a dealer is to check the fur buyers in your area.



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For questions concerning the laws and
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